

of our citizens came forward, received training from existing Citizen Corps members, and made the massive, weeks-long sheltering operation possible. The Judge said that Katrina was a blessing for our community because it showed us just how much we were able to give when our Louisiana neighbors needed a helping hand.

Just three weeks after the nation watched the devastation of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast by Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Rita was headed straight for Harris County. An already exhausted team, led by Judge Eckels, shut down the last sheltering operation for Katrina evacuees and prepared for the next storm. With less than 48 hours before Rita was predicted to reach landfall on Galveston Island, Judge Eckels worked with Governor Rick Perry and Houston Mayor Bill White to begin the largest evacuation in U.S. history. Under Judge Eckels' watchful eye and calm demeanor, he gave frequent updates to motorists stranded in the exodus and assured them that help was on the way. While the unprecedented evacuation was difficult, it was considered a success. Before the storm reached the shore later that night, the roadways were empty and our citizens were out of harms' way.

The Judge's work during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita was recognized with a number of awards. In an article entitled "The Power of Government to Do Good" in *Esquire* magazine, Judge Eckels was named the Best and Brightest 0/2005, Citizen of the Year for his extraordinary leadership. "When the city of New Orleans evacuated to Houston, Harris County Judge Robert Eckels took them in. He was an island of competence in the face of catastrophe," *Esquire* wrote.

The Partners for Livable Communities, a nonprofit organization headquartered here in Washington DC, gave the Judge the "Bridge Builders Award" for his collaboration efforts during the hurricane crises. The Greater Houston Partnership named him one of "Houston's Greatest Individuals 2005." *American City and County Leader* magazine named Eckels "2006 County Leader of the Year."

Under his leadership, the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management has become a national model for preparedness and response to emergency situations, natural or manmade. Considered an expert in local emergency management and response, Judge Eckels has testified before both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate Homeland Security Committees and he serves on the State and Local Senior Advisory Committee to President Bush's Homeland Security Advisory Council.

HEALTHCARE

The population of Harris County has grown considerably in recent decades and with that growth has come a disproportionately large population of uninsured and underinsured. Judge Eckels realized long ago that the needs of this growing community cannot be met by government alone. Therefore, under his leadership, Harris County has forged strong partnerships with non-profit, private, public, and faith-based health care providers and clinics to coordinate medical services to the poor and indigent. The Harris County Healthcare Council was created to coordinate a more efficient health care delivery system. He has, throughout his tenure as County Judge, maintained that the Harris County Hospital District should

be there for those who have no where else to turn.

FLOOD CONTROL

In 1996 Judge Eckels asked Congress to help speed some of the critical flood-damage reduction projects to protect the citizens of our county. Under his leadership, the Harris County Flood Control District is now able to take the lead on flood reduction projects. As a result, our constituents along the Brays Bayou and White Oak Bayou are already receiving the benefits of flood mitigation years ahead of schedule.

CLEAN AIR

Harris County is committed to cleaning the air in our region. Judge Eckels is nationally recognized as an expert in devising and implementing acceptable air quality plans on the county level. He has testified before a U.S. Senate subcommittee on air quality issues and has appeared on national television news shows discussing environmental issues.

He also initiated new monitoring systems to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations, funding computer modeling to base our clean air decisions on the best information possible and searching for the newest and most cost-effective technologies to clean our air. Under his watch, the latest state of the art monitors that detect most of the 189 Hazardous Air Pollutants listed by the Environmental Protection Agency are in place in Harris County—paid for by environmental violators, not taxpayers.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Judge Eckels is passionate about children's issues. As fathers, he and I have shared many stories about raising our daughters. Like me, he always puts his family first. He and his wife, Jet, could not be more committed to their daughter, Kirby Rae.

That commitment inspired Robert to take a vital leadership role in the Do the Write Thing Challenge, a program of the National Campaign to Stop Violence. As chairman for the State of Texas, he has grown the program to an unprecedented size with more than 24,000 participants in 10 communities. Judge Eckels also spearheaded a collaboration that would become the Children's Assessment Center (CAC). The CAC gives victims on-site access to experts in abuse prevention, medical treatment, forensic examination, family counseling, therapeutic services and criminal prosecution. Each year, more than 5,000 sexually abused children, their siblings, and non-offending caregivers are served by this nationally recognized partnership of more than 20 agencies.

Judge Robert Eckels is a sound fiscal conservative who has always taken a business approach to government. Harris County applies common sense business principles to provide the best service at the least cost to taxpayers. Under his leadership Harris County introduced private sector competition to drive down the cost of government services. He led the reorganization of county departments and performance reviews, cut the number of departments in half, reducing service duplication, improving coordination and accountability and saving more than \$14 million each year.

Under his leadership the county's debt was restructured, saving more than \$60 million since 1995. Confidence in Harris County's financial footing has been restored. All of the major bond rating agencies have upgraded Harris County's bond ratings saving taxpayers

millions of dollars in interest each year. Most importantly, financial reserves are up, revenues are up, and spending is under control. Judge Eckels understands that when we decrease taxes here at the Federal level, and cut funding to state and local governments, they cannot and must not increase taxes at the local level. He has found new and innovative ways to deliver the same services that promote the quality of life we have all come to expect here in the greatest country in the history of the world.

I hope that Robert Eckels will reenter public life again someday because he is an exemplary leader. If he chooses not to, there is no doubt that he has left behind a strong legacy in Harris County. I will always value his friendship and counsel.

TRIBUTE TO SYDNEY EVERETT

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 14, 2007

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, the St. Louis Post Dispatch recently published a series of articles to shed light on music education in the St. Louis Public Schools. The significant benefits conveyed by music education are immeasurable. Studies have found that education in the arts leads to success in society, school and life. I applaud the St. Louis Public Schools for recognizing the value of music education. I also commend Mr. Bob Dorries, the instrumental music teacher at McKinley Junior Classical Academy, a St. Louis magnet school, for his commitment to cultivating the gift of music in our children. I was especially impressed with the article's coverage of sixth-grader Sydney Everett's intense desire to master playing the clarinet.

In reading Steve Giegerich's articles, it is obvious that Sydney is an exceptional student who is dedicated to conquering new objectives and realizing her full potential. Sydney's love for music was instilled by her parents Sean and Deirdre Everett. They have always made music a part of Sydney's life. Her father, having taught himself to play the trumpet, shared his love for music with his children. Sydney exhibits that same drive and frequently takes the initiative to teach herself lessons before the class covers them.

Madam Speaker, it is with great privilege that I recognize Sydney Everett today before Congress. I encourage Sydney to continue her studies and remain committed to exploring new horizons.

The two articles from the St. Louis Post Dispatch chronicling Sydney's journey to master playing the clarinet follow this tribute.

[From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Sept. 30, 2006]

LEARNING TO PLAY: WILL SYDNEY MAKE THE BAND?

(By Steve Giegerich)

It's no accident that a poster of Miles Davis is in the sight line of Bob Dorries' students as he stands at the blackboard to review scales, time signatures and other rudiments of music education at McKinley Classical Junior Academy.

Dorries put it there as a constant reminder of the link between the East St. Louis jazz icon and the potential heirs to his legacy who pass through Dorries' classroom each day.

The connection is pretty much lost on the majority of sixth-graders enrolled in the instrumental music program at the St. Louis magnet middle school.

Most don't know Miles Davis from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

The exception is an intense young girl in Dorries' seventh-period band class. Sydney Everett required no introduction to Davis, the man who provided much of the soundtrack for her childhood.

As parents, Sean and Deirdre Everett's priorities were established far in advance of Sydney's arrival on March 30, 1995. "Education has been the goal since her birth," said Deirdre.

The motivation came in part by the failure to realize their own potential. Both Sean and Deirdre had left college without a degree.

"I always felt I didn't take full advantage of all I had," said Sean. "Now I look at the way the world is going, and you have to have that degree."

From the moment she was born, music danced on the periphery of Sydney's life.

Her father had developed an eclectic taste in music as his family moved from one military base to another across the country.

"I listen to it all," he said. And the Everetts made sure their children did the same. Sydney and her brother, Sean Michael, their father said, "have an open mind toward music and life, too. I want them to experience everything possible."

Between the birth of his first and second children, Sean bought a used trumpet at a secondhand store.

Though he'd dabbled with the guitar in high school, he'd never learned to read music. He still can't. But he taught himself to play that trumpet by emulating chords and riffs of the musician he admires above all others: Miles Davis.

When Sean Everett's daughter took a seat in Dorries' band room a month ago, her own experience as a musician was limited to a month of piano lessons, family Karaoke sing-alongs at Christmastime and a class at Kennard Elementary School that taught the 12-tone musical scale.

Over the summer, Sydney toyed with the idea of enrolling in McKinley's vocal music program, a notion she ultimately rejected. "I knew I couldn't sing," she said.

On the day she walked into Dorries' class for the first time, Sydney was just as sure she knew which instrument she wanted to play: the trumpet, like her dad.

"Just to hear music in the house will be nice," said Sean Everett. "Music opens up so many horizons. She'll meet so many characters playing music, and it's such a release. Who knows? She could wind up joining an orchestra, seeing the world."

Before that can happen, Sydney must learn an instrument.

LEARNING THE NOTES

Impish and sarcastic, music teacher Dorries often plays the theme from "Final Jeopardy!" on the classroom synthesizer as students ponder a question. Dorries, 43, has a firm set of rules and little tolerance for those who break them.

Rule No.1 for sixth-graders: Before receiving an instrument, they must score an 80 or above on a 60-question exam that tests their knowledge of the categories of band instruments, musical history and, critically, the 12-tone notation scale.

The payoff for those who obey the rules, practice and stay the course is a chair in one of McKinley's four bands, which perform two concerts a year.

The students get as many opportunities as necessary to pass the exam. Most need it. Rare is the student who hits the magic score of 80 the first time.

Summoning lessons learned at elementary school, Sydney scored an 89.

The following week, Dorries asked the students who had fallen short of a passing grade to review their tests and prepare to retake the exam. Then he summoned Sydney to his desk.

"Let's see what you can blow," the teacher said, producing an array of sanitized mouthpieces for brass and woodwinds.

"I come from the theory of music that every person's mouth determines what instrument they should play," he explained. "It has nothing to do with intelligence, where you've come from, what school you attended or your ability. It's something you come to naturally. It's the shape of your mouth."

The fourth generation in a family of musicians, Dorries' philosophy was born of personal experience, a childhood dream of playing the trumpet shattered by the inability to make a single sound through a cornet mouthpiece. It wasn't until his teacher handed him the mouthpiece for a saxophone that he achieved the desired result. He was 5 and has played the sax ever since.

Dorries turned to Sydney: "The lesson here is that what we think we want to play, nine times out of 10, is not the instrument we wind up with. And looking at your overbite, I'd say there's a real good chance you'll be good at a wind instrument."

First, however, Sydney needed to learn the same lesson instilled in Dorries.

She blew into a trombone mouthpiece. Nothing. Same with the mouthpiece for a cornet. All hope of following in the footsteps of her dad and Miles Davis vanished, she slumped a bit in her chair.

Dorries handed her a mouthpiece and a clarinet reed and demonstrated how to moisten it. "Blow," he instructed.

A duck call broke the quiet of the room.

"It's called a squawk, that's what we're after," said Dorries. Sydney sat straighter, blew into the mouthpiece. Squawk.

All eyes on their classmate, the rest of the students stopped studying. Dorries held Sydney's cheeks to prevent them from puffing out. "Roll the mouthpiece over in your mouth," he said gently.

Sydney blew. Squawk.

Her classmates applauded and whooped. Sydney smiled.

After auditioning two more mouthpieces, she ruled out the saxophone and flute and chose the instrument her mother had played, long ago, at O'Fallon Technical High.

"I want the clarinet," Sydney told her teacher. "I like the way it sounds."

"I think that's a wise choice, either that or the flute," he responded. "With your mouth structure, you belong on a wind instrument. You have lovely cheeks."

Dorries excused himself and retreated to an adjoining supply room, emerging a moment later with a small black case.

Eyes wide, Sydney watched as Dorries slowly revealed the contents of the black case: a coal-black Yamaha clarinet nestled unassembled on a bed of molded velvet.

He handed her a form. The clarinet, he explained, belongs to the St. Louis Public Schools. After her parents gave written assurance that it would receive proper care, the instrument would be hers to take home.

Sydney slipped the piece of paper into a notebook just as the bell rang. Hefting her books, she headed for the door, her next class and the next phase of the journey envisioned by Sean and Deirdre Everett, long before their daughter was born.

[From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Nov. 18, 2006]

LEARNING TO PLAY: GIFTED STUDENTS GET NEW MOUNTAIN TO SCALE

(By Steve Giegerich)

No one will ever confuse Bob Dorries with Harold Hill, the mythical Music Man who, in another River City, bamboozled parents with the belief that their children could play double bell euphoniums and big bassoons—not to mention 76 trombones—without learning a single note of music.

Dorries is a fundamentalist. Not in the religious sense, but of the doctrine that music is a gift learned slowly and methodically through repetition.

For Dorries, the instrumental music teacher at McKinley Junior Classical Academy, a St. Louis magnet school for academically talented students, "Sixth grade is a kind of band boot camp."

Boot camp rule No. 1: Every student must pass an exam testing his or her grasp of musical history, notation scales, time signatures, flats and sharps.

Those who pass are paired with an instrument. Those who fail are destined to take the exam until they get it right.

For nearly 2 weeks, the first rule produced a divide in Dorries' seventh-period, sixth-grade instrumental music class.

On one side, the successful test-takers, B-flat clarinetist Sydney Everett and alto saxophonists Megan Ratcliff and Nick Wiegand, attacked the beginning exercises in Book One of the "Standard of Excellence—Comprehensive Band Method" and its companion CD.

Across the room, the others found inspiration and passed the test one by one.

All things being relative, Sydney was virtuosos by the time Jonathan Brooks added a trombone, Shaunice Safford a flute, Kaelan Moorehead a B-flat clarinet and Wolfgang Fortel a trumpet to the seventh-period ensemble.

That Sydney's virtuosity occurred on a clarinet was a bit unexpected. Sydney had intended to take up the trumpet, the instrument her father had played during her formative years.

Her dream of emulating her dad and Miles Davis ended when Dorries determined that the shape of her mouth was more conducive to a woodwind. Upon receiving her instrument, Sydney had no problem adhering to boot camp rule No.2: self-discipline.

"I only have you twice a week for 50 minutes," Dorries points out at least, well, twice a week. "I can help you when you're here. But there's seven of you and one of me."

Translation: The real learning takes place 30 minutes at a time. And it takes place at home. Due diligence is documented in practice reports, signed by parents and delivered to Dorries every other week.

The exemplary practice reports are posted on a "Wall of Fame." Less-than-satisfactory reports land on a "Wall of Shame." Dorries is characteristically blunt:

Kids who don't practice won't participate in rehearsals, won't perform in concert and won't pass his class.

Quiet and intense by nature, Sydney exhibited a preternatural ability to figure things out on her own from the time she was in pre-kindergarten. When she took up the clarinet this year, there was little need for her parents, Shawn and Deirdre Everett, to remind their daughter to practice.

Barely a week after receiving her clarinet, Sydney jumped ahead in the book to teach herself "Hot Cross Buns," a song incorporating the three notes—E-C-D she'd learned to date.

So, too, had Megan, who'd also skipped to the lesson in her saxophone book. Best

friends since first grade, Sydney and Megan are equals in all ways but one: When it comes to decibels, Megan's instrument trumps Sydney's.

"I don't like the music we play in class that much because I can't hear myself," said Sydney. "It's the CD and Megan. They drown me out."

Along with classmate Nick—who learned the rudiments of his saxophone over the summer—Megan and Sydney established themselves as the tone-setters (so to speak) of the seventh period.

RULE NO. 3

The third rule of sixth-grade boot camp stipulates that students must learn to assemble, disassemble and properly store the instrument in its carrying case before they blow a single note.

With Dorries preoccupied with Shaunice and her flute, Sydney stepped into the breach.

Turning to fellow clarinetist Kaelan, she reviewed the rudiments of clarinet assembly and disassembly she'd learned just weeks before.

"Mr. Dorries was helping Shaunice," she explained later. "And (Kaelan) was doing it wrong. I was afraid that Mr. Dorries would yell at him, so I helped out."

"Besides," she added with a smile, "I was bored."

Not for long.

BIG NEWS

In the first week of this month, Dorries cleared his throat and waited for the din to die down.

The acerbic band director smiled broadly, clearly reflecting his pleasure at the announcement: "We've decided to let the Beginning Band butcher the holiday concert."

"Jingle Bells," he added, "will be the piece sacrificed on the altar of music."

Dorries paused. There was more news. Three students in the class, he continued, would not be joining the beginning band.

The class shifted nervously, wondering who would be excluded and why.

"Sydney Everett, congratulations. Megan Ratcliff, congratulations. Nick Wiegand, congratulations," Dorries said. "I'm about to hand you three pieces of music. You'll continue to work from the red book in class here. These three other pieces are from the blue book. The three of you are in Intermediate Band."

The first thing Sydney noticed when she glanced at the music—"Jingle Bell Rock," "Joyeux Noel" and "Tequila"—were the chords.

Dorries picked up on her hesitation.

"I'm going to warn you, there are some notes in there you haven't learned yet," he said.

Sydney studied the music. "Can we write on the music?" she asked.

Dorries looked at her. In 6 weeks, he knew, Sydney would take her seat on a stage before friends, family, teachers and classmates. She would lift a mouthpiece between her teeth and play an instrument which, when the semester began, she knew existed but hardly understood.

"You surely can," Dorries told his student. "Just make sure you use pencil."

TRIBUTE TO KAYLEE MARIE RADZYMSKI

HON. ZACH WAMP

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 14, 2007

Mr. WAMP. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge an outstanding young lady from

the Third Congressional District of Tennessee, Kaylee Marie Radzynski, of Cleveland, Tennessee. Kaylee is an incredibly special young lady with great ambitions and a strong sense of pride in her country and her military.

Kaylee joined the United States Naval Sea Cadet Corp in December 2002 and has befriended many of our men and women in uniform as she has traveled to our military bases and met with our soldiers first hand. In talking with some soldiers who had just returned from Iraq, she learned that among the things they missed while away from home was entertainment. So when Kaylee was 14 years old, she started an organization known today as Tunes 4 the Troops which consists of her collecting compact discs and DVDs and sending them to our soldiers who are defending our country.

As of last week, Kaylee has sent over 25,000 CDs and DVDs with a value of over \$375,000.00. Kaylee has raised over \$19,000 in cash, goods, and services. The Tennessee Titans NFL team sent her \$4,000 and Outback Steak House provided her with 300 free meals recently for a fundraiser where she raised over \$5,000. The money pays for cases, printing, and shipping costs. So many others are pitching in now . . . a box manufacturer in Ohio donates all the boxes and tape; David Smith, owner of Dick's Graphics in Cleveland, Tennessee, does all the printing at cost; Cleveland News Now.net, a media group in Cleveland, has given Kaylee office space with all utilities and Internet access as well as a computer to use there for 2 years; Cleveland High School, her sponsor in this endeavor, has given Kaylee a checking account at school to facilitate the bookkeeping.

Kaylee has set up drop-off locations all over Bradley County including the Armed Forces Recruiting Offices, Award Realty, Bradley County Courthouse, Circuit Court Clerk's Office, Cleveland City Mayor Tom Rowland's Office, Cleveland High School, Dick's Graphics, Bradley County Justice Center, and Southern Heritage Bank. As of this March, Kaylee has set up 27 other locations across the country to collect more CDs and DVDs for Tunes 4 the Troops with over 20 more boxes scheduled for delivery in combat zones this month.

Madam Speaker, 15-year-old Kaylee Radzynski understands that she is the future of America and that she can look forward to her future because of the sacrifices made for her and all Americans. I'm so proud to represent Kaylee who is using her voice to say "thank you" to all those serving in the Armed Forces of the United States of America!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 14, 2007

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam Speaker, I regret that due to an illness, I missed recorded votes on March 12, 2007 and March 13, 2007.

Had I been present on those days, I would have voted in support of H.R. 85, H. Res. 136, H. Res. 89, H. Res. 64, H. Res. 228, and H. Res. 222.

SUPPORT FOR 2007 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL

HON. NANCY E. BOYDA

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 14, 2007

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the upcoming 2007 fiscal year supplemental appropriations bill.

Much of the debate on this bill has focused, quite rightly, on the provisions that codify President Bush's benchmarks for Iraq into law. This is an important subject that I plan to discuss in depth later this week.

But today I wish to spotlight another element of this legislation, one that offers renewed hope and opportunity to millions of children in Kansas and throughout the United States: the extension of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP.

If you are fortunate enough to have health coverage, you might not realize what peace of mind insurance brings. You don't worry that your child will wake up with an ear infection that will cost a month's rent. You need not fear that the price of a broken leg will force you to default on your auto loan, or that the injuries from a car crash will obliterate a year's salary.

But for many Americans, these fears are a fact of daily life. Forty-seven million of our fellow citizens—47 million of our brothers and sisters and our sons and daughters, 47 million of our coworkers and colleagues and our friends and neighbors—47 million of us lack health insurance.

Worst of all, among those 47 million uninsured Americans are nine million children.

This is not just an economic or an institutional challenge. It is the moral crisis of our age.

The Federal Government has addressed this simmering emergency through two primary means. The first is decades-old and well-known: Medicaid. Medicaid is a good and vital program, but its scope is very limited. In some states, if your family earns one dollar less than the poverty line, you will receive full Medicaid coverage—but if you earn just a few dollars more, you're ineligible for any assistance whatsoever.

A sane health care policy must recognize that families earning 125% or 150% or even 200% of the poverty line need a helping hand. And that's where the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP, enters the scene. SCHIP introduces badly needed flexibility into the Federal health care system. In short, it tells the states, "If you want to expand the eligibility of low-income children and families for government-sponsored health insurance, we'll offer matching funds to help you do it."

In the decade since its inception, SCHIP has proven itself an outstanding success. It has enrolled six million beneficiaries, dramatically reducing the number of uninsured children in our nation.

Later in this legislative session, Congress will consider extending SCHIP beyond 2007, and you'd better believe I'll fight every step of the way for its renewal. But for now our task is simpler. Due to poor planning and inadequate funding from the do-nothing 109th Congress, 14 states are running out of money to finance SCHIP through the current fiscal